

10 CONTENT MARKETING TACTICS TO SCRAP IN 2018

(AND WHAT TO REPLACE THEM WITH)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction

2 Blogging, and Only Blogging

3 Misleading/Clickbait Headlines

4 Gating Content Like Your Life Depends on it

5 Pop-Ups with UX Flaws (Which Google Hates)

6 “Set it and Forget it” – Forgoing Reoptimization

7 Bad Retargeting

8 Subject Matter Expertise Above Everything Else

9 Narrow Content that YOU Want, Not Your Readers

10 Sticking with the Old – Out of Fear of the New

11 Using Too Many CTAs (Especially Generic Ones)

12 Conclusion



Introduction

We all have our faults. Some of us more than others.

But it's almost 2018, and content marketing has thrived for more than a decade now. Why are we still making mistakes, heeding bad advice and adding to the trash pile of terrible content?

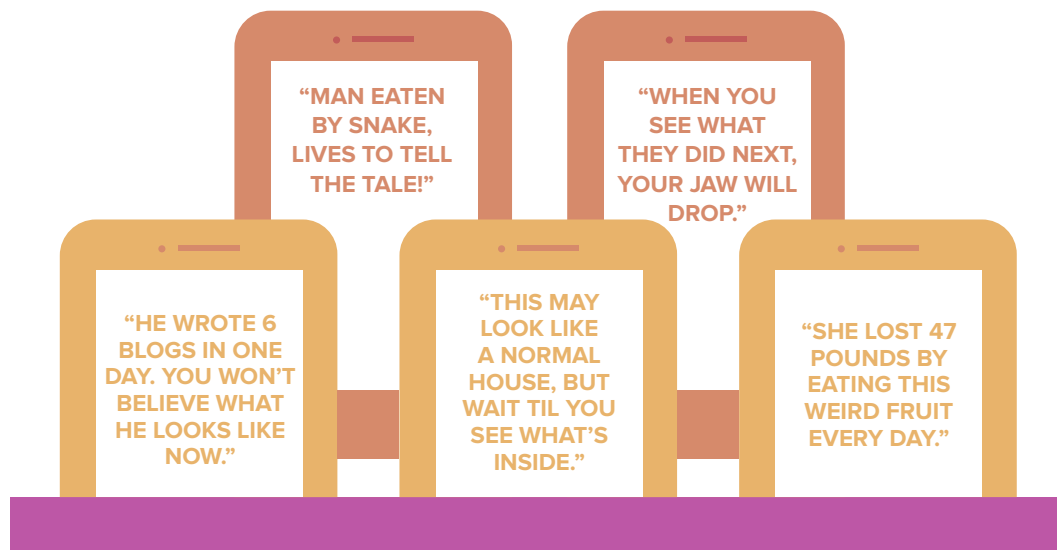
That's not a rhetorical question – we need answers, and we need to learn more.

To begin, let's all agree to stop using these 10 content marketing tactics as soon as possible. Like, right now.

Misleading/Clickbait Headlines

This is a bad habit everyone has developed over time. We all want the best listicle, the insatiable Facebook post and the quirky, overly punctuated title – after all, they can produce a lot of clicks and shares from unengaged readers.

But Google (and, more slowly, social platforms) is on a mission to weed out thin, clickbait-ridden content, so the longer marketers stick to the same “amazing headline, but terrible follow-through” format, the sooner they’ll see their organic rankings tank.



THE FUTURE

RankBrain, along with the ongoing transition to human-first search preferences, should prompt you to drop the keyword stuffing and overhyped titling we’re all used to seeing.

Headlines will remain very important. Very. Case in point: Changing one word in an email subject line has proven to increase click-throughs by **46%**.

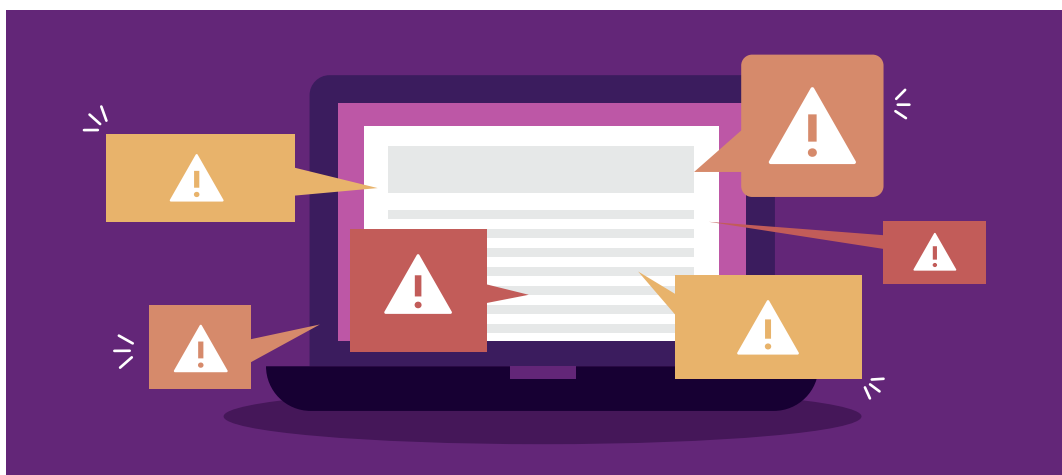
But the contents of the book must match the cover. If you fail to deliver great content within your post, readers will be left unfulfilled and with a bad taste in their mouths. They will remember you as the brand that over-promised and under-delivered.

So speak naturally, fully articulate your premise in the body copy and don’t over-promise with your titles.

Pop-Ups with UX Flaws (Which Google Hates)

Disruptive advertising on the web has been around as long as the internet itself. However, some marketers are still looking to generate ad revenue through excessive advertisements located (or popping up) on every region of their sites. Even worse, many don't take the time to master the UX component of their ads.

As of 2017, Google officially penalizes mobile sites that serve pop-up ads after users move from SERPs to a webpage. This sort of penalty will likely become more common as search is now a mobile-first world.



THE FUTURE

There are several types of pop-ups, including new-window popups, modals, overlays and interstitials.

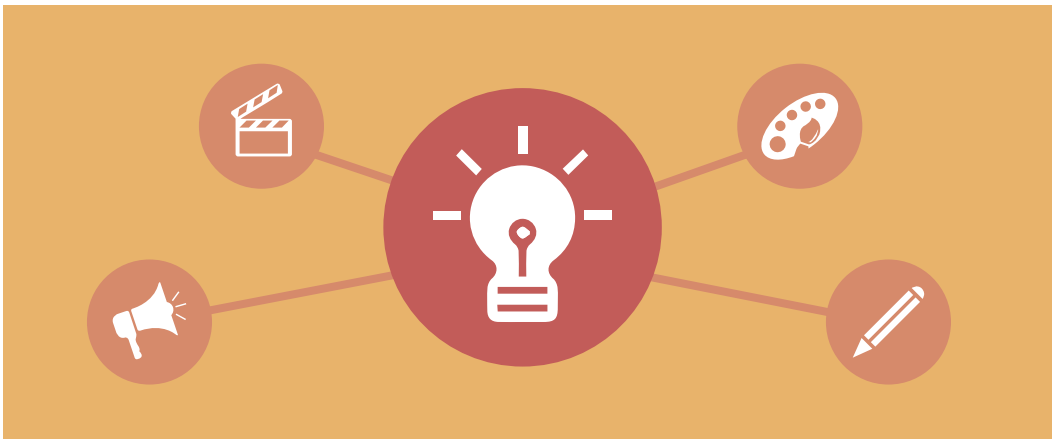
In general, anything that opens a new webpage is not going to work – too many visitors use ad-blockers. Most experts believe that even the least-intrusive ads will soon be booted from SERPs.

That means **native advertising will become the new norm.**

Subject Matter Expertise Above Everything Else

Subject matter experts within your company are great resources to lean on when launching creative assets. But, they can't be the be-all, end-all. Moreover, you can't forgo a talented content producer (designer, writer, videographer) simply because he or she doesn't immediately have the same SME as your internal resources.

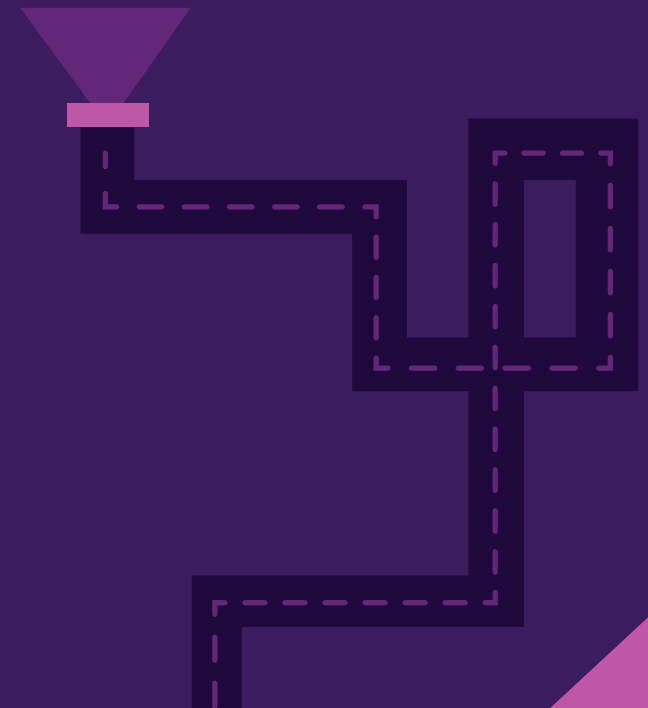
There's a learning curve. And as you've likely experienced before, prodding your in-house experts to actually sit down and produce content at scale is impossible, so save yourself the headache and partner with an agency/producer that complements your marketing efforts.



THE FUTURE

Creative agencies are built for results – that's why they exist. That means content creation is actually one tiny gap to fill. You also need the upfront keyword research, competitive analysis, CRO testing, post-launch reoptimization, campaign measurement and reporting that feeds into subsequent content.

You need the whole marketing machine, not just the faint idea of the blueprints.

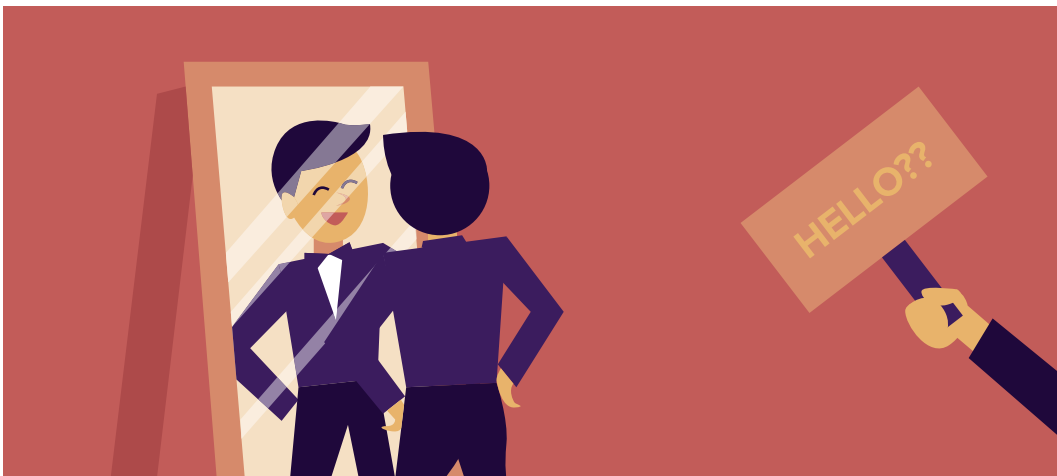


Narrow Content that YOU Want, Not Your Readers

We often find that companies get stuck in echo chambers: They push a single narrative, shun any references to outsiders and force overly dense, overly promotional content down the throats of readers.

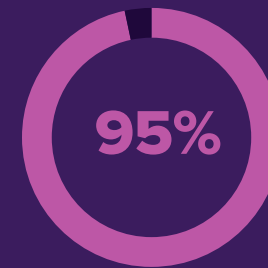
Who are their readers? Typically employees of that company itself or only a small subset of industry folks who likely provide no commercial value to the brand.

Remember, you are not your readers. You are not your buyers.



THE FUTURE

We're in a consumer-first world. We all have instant access to information. And now, we only have time for the best of it.



Close to **95%** of consumers find user-generated content helpful when making a purchasing decision.



Influencer content generates **\$6.50** for every \$1 spent.

Content that comes from trusted influencers or peers is more profitable than churning out the same sales content yourself. So, appease your readers, not your ego.

Sticking with the Old – Out of Fear of the New

About **28%** of marketing budgets are spent specifically on content marketing. It's estimated that **50%** of content receives 2 or fewer interactions on Facebook, which means what you're producing right now probably isn't working as well as it could be.

Marketers generally avoid innovative concepts or off-the-wall techniques that could reinvigorate their content out of fear of the unknown. Will it perform? Will it be a waste? Will you have to change your workflow? Will it require more work?

In 2018, “tried and true” = “boring and irrelevant.”



THE FUTURE

Marketers are upping their content marketing investments each year and are also diversifying into other assets. Those that don't can expect results to flatline.

Here's what's already on the horizon:

- ▶ Interactive campaigns on social (quizzes, giveaways, contests, live video streaming).
- ▶ Virtual and augmented reality videos.
- ▶ Micro-moment marketing.
- ▶ Machine learning platforms.
- ▶ Personalized content.

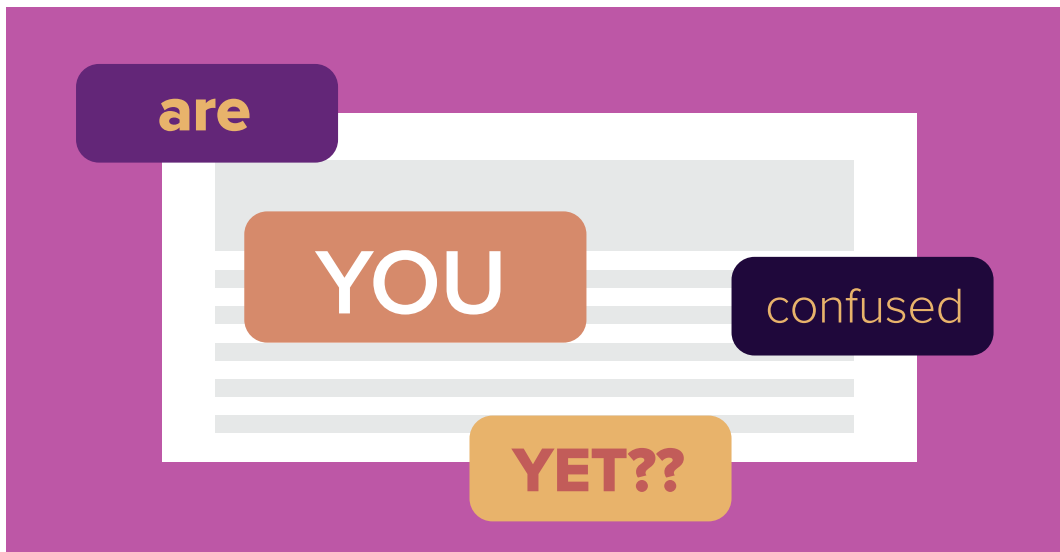
Are you experimenting with any of the above?

Using Too Many CTAs (Especially Generic Ones)

There's nothing worse than a confusing call to action. Well, perhaps several confusing CTAs at once.

Too often, marketers believe investments in CTAs mean creating more of them rather than refining their existing ones.

Content with irrelevant, misplaced, conflicting or too many calls to action does one thing: it confuses readers. Now why would you want to do that?



THE FUTURE

Your calls to action need to be hyper-targeted, personalized and unique to the asset/campaign you're pushing.

Emails with a single CTA can increase sales by more than **1,600%**.

Personalized CTAs convert **42%** more than generic CTAs.

Avoid clutter, misdirection or bland CTAs, and instead run conversion rate optimization experiments to drive maximum value out of each CTA.



Conclusion

Finally. Now there are no more excuses.

We have the problems, we have the solutions and we have our eyes set on the future of content marketing.

This eBook is a starting point – there are plenty of other tactical pitfalls marketers still fall into, and who knows, maybe we'll have another eBook queued up for those as well.

We have your back.



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